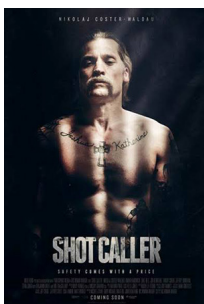


## DVD/Blu-ray Roundup for October 20, 2017

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Friday, 20 October 2017 08:44

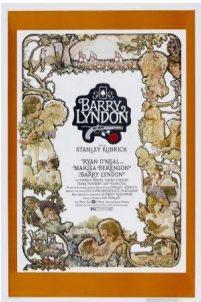
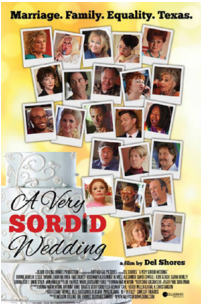
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Welcome back to another look at highlights coming your way on Blu-ray and DVD. There are some big hits arriving as well as plenty of interesting independent fare. So, if you can't make it out to the movies this week, be sure to give one of these titles a try!

### BIG NEW RELEASES!

*Girls Trip* - In this hit comedy, four old college friends decide to reunite and vacation at the Essence Festival in New Orleans. Once there they begin to reconnect, although their hard partying ways lead to a great deal of wild and crazy behavior. This flick was a surprise success at the box office and earned good notices from critics too. Some complained about the crude humor on display and the predictable story, but most appreciated the onscreen camaraderie, found it humorous and believed it deserved its success. It stars Regina Hall, Queen Latifa, Jada Pinkett Smith, Tiffany Haddish and Larenz Tate.

*God of War* - Set in the 15th century, this historical drama details the proliferation of Japanese pirates of the coast of China, who would attack local vessels and rampage through the area. A Chinese ship captain leads a force to battle the threat and restore order. This elaborate production received mostly positive reviews. They warned that anyone expecting Hung to show off his kung-fu skills would be disappointed, but countered that the production was impressive and events portrayed were interesting. The cast includes Wenzhuo Zhao, Sammo Hung and Yasuaki Kurata.

*Lady Macbeth* - Based on the 1865 Russian novella *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk* that was inspired by the Shakespeare play, this grim tale comes from the point of view of the title character. Caught in a loveless marriage and forced to follow strict tradition, she rebels by starting an affair and coldly plotting the death of her husband. This UK effort earned plenty of praise. Admittedly, there was a naysayer or two who called the enterprise icy and off-putting, but many more were hypnotized by the lead performance and intrigued by the dark tone and morally gray characters. It features Florence Pugh, Cosmo Jarvis, Paul Hilton and Naomi Ackie.

*Landline* - This independent comedy involves a teenager and her two sisters living in New York in the mid-90s. They discover that her father is having an affair and are forced to process the information, acting out in various ways and reconciling past issues with one another. Reaction was reasonably good towards the project. A few critiqued it for failing to engage them

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emotionally and relying too heavily on 90s nostalgia, but the majority complimented the cast members and felt it earned enough laughs to recommend. The movie stars Jenny Slate, Jay Duplass, Abbie Quinn, John Turturro and Edie Falco.

*Leatherface* - Note: This movie is actually hitting shelves on Oct. 20th. The latest sequel in *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* series received an unusual release platform, streaming last month, then getting a few sporadic cinema dates and now arriving on disc this week. It's a prequel that traces the history of the iconic villain and how he became a psychopathic killer. The press weren't quiet as harsh on it as one would expect. Almost half absolutely hated the new entry or at the very least commented that it wasn't memorable enough to make an impression, but a portion admired the attempts to turn it into a mystery and enjoyed the out-there antics of some of the cast members. It features Finn Jones and has bit parts from Stephen Dorff and Lili Taylor.

*Red Christmas* - Halloween isn't even here yet, but horror fans can get an early jump on the next holiday with this yuletide scare flick from Australia. It's about a estranged family attempting to celebrate the season together, only to have a cloaked stranger arrive and cause bloody chaos inside the home. This feature split reviewers. Half found it gory, extremely nasty and even offensive at times. Others suggested it was beautifully shot, well structured and unabashedly designed to push viewer's buttons. The cast includes Dee Wallace, Geoff Morrell, Sarah Bishop and David Collins.

*Sand Castle* - During the occupation of Iraq, a group of soldier are sent to protect a small village and help provide its residents with much needed water. This war drama was written by a veteran who served in the conflict, but it ultimately divided the press. In fact, their reactions were all over the place. Half thought it was well-intentioned but too understated to be memorable. The other stated that the personal approach, focusing on one particular soldier's daily grind and humanitarian efforts, was an interesting variation on the genre. It stars Nicholas Hoult, Logan Marshall-Green and Henry Cavill.

*Shot Caller* - A business professional is convicted of a crime and locked away in prison. After paying his dues, he is eventually released. However, the gang who took him under their wing and protected him inside insists that he do something nefarious for them on the outside... or face horrible consequences. Response to the movie was mostly upbeat. A few found the logic behind the protagonist's actions questionable. However, the majority complimented the film for its brutal depictions of incarceration and appreciated the performances. It features Nikolaj Coster-Waldau, Jon Bernthal, Lake Bell and Benjamin Bratt.

*Spider-Man: Homecoming* - One of the summer's biggest hits arrives on disc. It's a reboot of the popular Marvel superhero, following the development of the teen's web-slinger skills and crime-fighting abilities. Along the way, he comes into contact with a nasty arms dealer who operates under the moniker of The Vulture. A few critics commented that these pictures were beginning to feel as if they were coming off of an assembly line, but almost all acknowledged that it was a fun and well-produced popcorn flick. Ultimately, it received near unanimous praise. The cast includes Tom Holland, Michael Keaton, Robert Downey Jr., Marisa Tomei, Jon Favreau, Gwyneth Paltrow, Zendaya and Donald Glover.

*A Very Sordid Wedding* - This follow-up to the 2000 comedy *Sordid Lives* picks up after the events of the first film. When many of the residents in a rural Baptist Texan town decide to mount a protest against gay marriage, other members of the community attempt to thwart their progress by planning a demonstration of their own. Overall, the press enjoyed the film. There were some who didn't appreciate the over-the-top approach to the material, but almost all found that it was a fun flick that benefited greatly from its impressive cast. It stars Bonnie Bedelia, Dale Dickey, Whoopi Goldberg, Leslie Jordan and Caroline Rhea.

### BLASTS FROM THE PAST!

This is a great release for older films finding their way onto high definition. Shout! Factory have one Blu-ray in particular that I'm quite fond of. *Three O'Clock High* (1987) always seemed to me like an underrated effort. It was essentially a teen take on the classic western,

*High Noon*

. The story features a student who finds himself challenged to a fight with the biggest bully in school. With the minutes counting down, the desperate protagonist and his friends must wrack their brains to try to find a way out of the confrontation. Casey Siemaszko stars and it's a very effective little flick that boasts a lot of funny moments and shows off some impressive camera tricks (for its day), thanks to director Phil Joanou (

*U2: Rattle and Hum*

,

*State of Grace*

). The movie is finally being put out on Blu-ray in a "Collector's Edition" that offers all kinds of new extras, including a director commentary and interview, as well as talks with the screenwriters and costume designer. It also comes with a theatrical trailer and stills gallery. I'm looking forward to catching up with this one.

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Criterion are putting out a Blu-ray of Stanley Kubrick's historical drama, *Barry Lyndon* (1975). If you haven't seen it, this effort features some absolutely incredible cinematography. In fact, super-fast lenses and a low-light stock were specially developed and used for the film so that all the interiors could be lit and shot by candlelight. The movie earned its director of photography an Academy Award. The Blu-ray features a 4K restoration of the film, a new documentary on its production, a feature on the photography and multiple interviews with crew members. There are also new bonuses that include more critic analysis and more.

With the finale of the latest season of *Twin Peaks* recently airing, Criterion also have a Blu-ray of the feature film, *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk With Me* (1992). This prequel sets up the events of the original series and includes plenty of eccentric tangents involving many of the familiar characters. It's a much darker and more disturbing experience than the TV show, but should impress and fascinate those who enjoy Lynch's work. It has also been given a 4K transfer and comes with 90 minutes of deleted scenes and alternate takes assembled by the director. It also comes with interviews with some of the cast and crew.

Kino have some curious titles as well. They include a Blu-ray of the Jean Luc-Godard feature, *L'a Chinoise* (1967) as well as a DVD of the goofy Robert Mitchum/Jaclyn Smith suspense picture, *Nightkill* (1980). I haven't seen this one but it looks like it might provide some B-movie thrills.

Speaking of B-movies, the distributor is also putting out a Blu-ray special edition of *Rawhead Rex* (1986). This low-budget Irish horror picture is based on the short story by Clive Barker and involves a Pagan monster tearing up the countryside. Barker has disowned the feature and hates it intensely (it actually inspired him to helm *Hellraiser* himself), but the movie still has its followers. The new disc comes with a 4K transfer that will no doubt make the monster even phonier in appearance. It also includes a director's commentary that might be informative to creature feature fans.

They also have a DVD of the Italian flick *Revenge of the Dead* (1983). It's a slow-moving horror flick about characters rising from the dead. While it certainly isn't the greatest flick, it sure does have an absolutely fantastic poster (that admittedly has nothing to do with the movie itself). It's so good, I used it for a project of mine some years ago. They also have a Blu-ray of the revenge flick, *Rolling Vengeance* (1987).

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This one is about a man whose girlfriend is violently assaulted and builds a monster truck to run down those responsible... one of whom is played by Ned Beatty.

And Mill Creek are releasing budget-friendly Blu-rays of *Mary Reilly* (1996) and *Vice Versa* (1988).

*Mary Reilly*

(be sure to whisper it) is the story of

*Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*

told from the perspective of his maid. The movie stars Julia Roberts and John Malkovich. It flopped during its initial release, but might be worth another look.

*Vice Versa*

is another take on

*Freaky Friday*

in which cast members Judge Reinhold and Fred Savage play a father and son who switch bodies. I know that title has a lot of fans who will get a kick out of revisiting it.

## YOU KNOW, FOR KIDS!

Here are the week's kid-friendly titles.

*Batman vs. Two-Face*

*Teen Titans Go!:* Season 4, Part 1

## ON THE TUBE!

And below are this edition's TV-themed releases.

*American Gods:* Season 1

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*America: Promised Land* (History)

*Ancient Aliens*: Season 10

*The Good Place*: Season 1

*Green Acres*: The Complete Series

*Man With a Camera*: The Complete Series

*Masterpiece*: The Collection

*Rhoda*: The Final Season

*Samurai Jack*: The Complete Series

*Samurai Jack*: Season 5

***By Glenn Kay***

***For the Sun***